

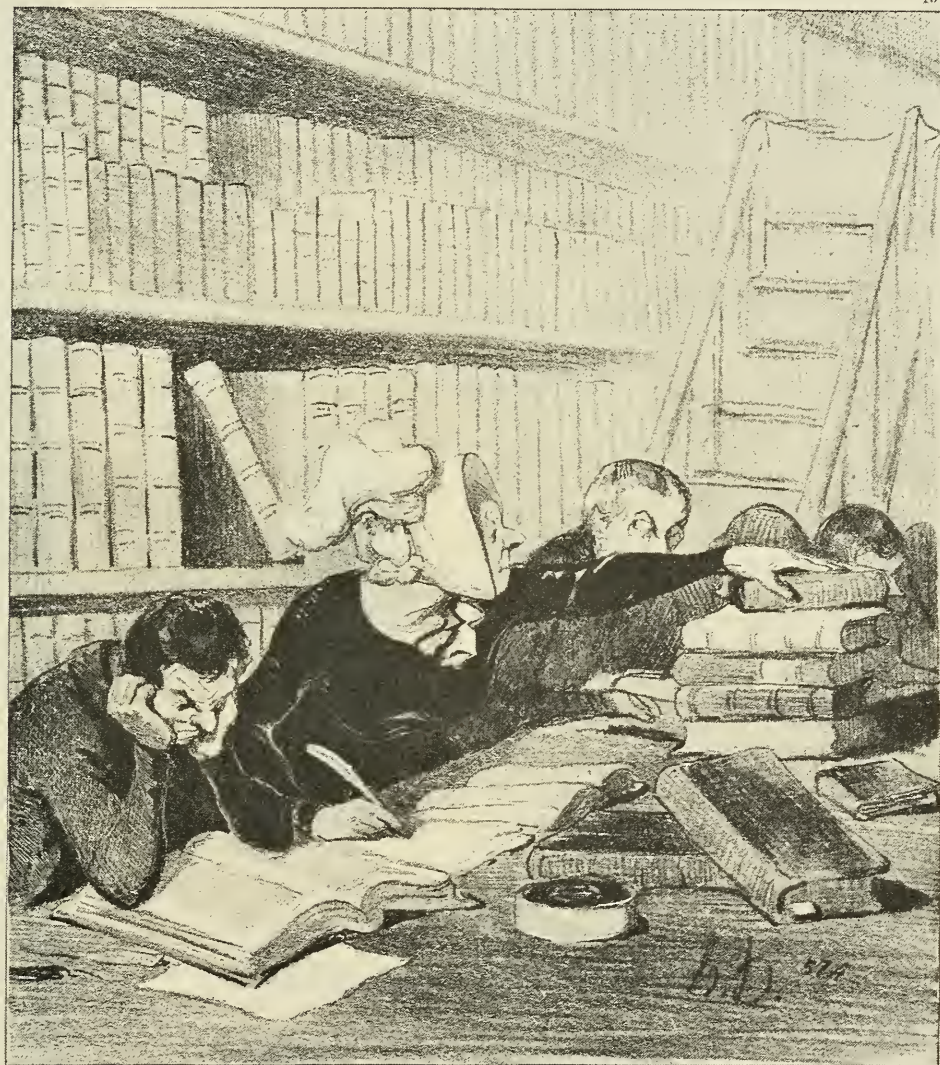
OCTAVO

An Occasional Communication

Number 3, Fall 1972

LES BAS BLEUS.

13.



Chez Robert & C^{ie} 91 de la Boueue 28

Imp. d'Robert & C^{ie}

-Monsieur, pardon si je vous gêne un peu... mais vous comprenez qu'écrivant en ce moment un roman nouveau, je dois consulter une foule d'auteurs anciens !...
- (Le Monsieur à part) Des auteurs anciens !... parbleu elle aurait bien dû les consulter de leur vivant, car elle a dû être leur contemporaine !...

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Dedicated to

MR. BENJAMIN A. TRUSTMAN

Attorney, Fellow of the University,

Benefactor and Bibliophile

THE SOCIETY OF BIBLIOPHILES AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Bern Dibner, *President*

David S. Berkowitz, *Editor*

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OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS
AND THE FOUNDING OF
LIBRARIES

One of the basic pedagogical maxims of my own teachers of history was to cultivate the imagination. Needless to say they did not mean to encourage the abandonment of evidence or to indulge in historical fiction. Recently in connection with the development of a new course, I have had occasion to apply the maxim in a somewhat systematic way. In this case what I tried to imagine was what kind of world was it without books and libraries and then, when did libraries first begin.

My first effort in this exercise of imagination was not very successful. As I recall it, I merely shuddered and went on to something more interesting. But the problem was not so easily dismissed, and to my annoyance it kept returning to my consciousness at odd moments and with insistent emphasis. Plainly, I was now the victim of my own training; the challenge could no longer be evaded; and the only practical alternative was to attempt to answer the questions.

In a fundamental sense I discovered that the first question could not really be answered — at least not by an historian. For a world without books and libraries is a world without literary evidence or collections, and without such sources and resources the historian literally has nothing but imagination left. It was no solution, I felt, to consider whether the question could be handled better by the techniques of the archaeologist whose ability to use the artifacts of earlier civilizations enable him to span the gaps left by the absence of literature materials. As far as I was concerned, a sun-baked tablet covered with cuneiform writing was as good as a book, and I knew that Breasted had found the earliest known archive of a nation as dating from the 28th century, B.C., that is 4700 years ago. I also knew that archaeologists had uncovered similar archival deposits for the Medians at Ecbatana, the Persians at Susa, and the XII Egyptian dynasty at Knossos. But if we seek beyond these, we really cross the frontier of the unknown.

Unknown in this case, I discovered, is a relative phenomena. The methodological limitations which create the unknown for historians and archaeologists are no barriers to other disciplines, such as the geologist, palaeontologist, and the cultural and social anthropologists. Most recent investigation by geologists, I learned, had fixed the beginning of the earth's independent existence as starting about 3,300,000,000 years ago. This was interesting, but of little relevance. What I wanted to know was how long man had been around and when did he begin to collect? The first part of this question has apparently been answered by palaeontologists who now estimate that forms of life approximating that of man apparently first occurred between 60,000,000 and 55,000,000 years ago. But evidence of man-like creatures, widely dispersed from England to China and from the Baltic to Central Africa, date back only 500,000 to 250,000 years.

Granting that the margin of error was more than comfortable and that new discoveries may necessitate further revision upward, I at least now knew that I had at most only 500,000 years of man's existence to cover. For a time-conscious historian this was paradoxically both comforting and dismaying. Comforting, because it was not millions and dismaying because it was still a problem beyond the reaches of historical techniques.

Fortunately, an American social anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, has brought the methods of his discipline to the problem. He has characterized the major line of development in this period of man's existence as a transition from a gathering economy, in which man survived by preying on other animals or on the bounty of nature, to a producing economy, in which man by cultivating plants and breeding animals introduced an increasing element of certainty into the provision of foodstuffs. The first stage he denoted as savagery and the second as barbarism, terms which approximately correlate with the periods that the archaeologists respectively call Old and New Stone Age.

But it was the third phase of development — the beginning of an exchange economy — that began to provide the first hints of a solution. About 10,000 years ago in the Alluvial Valleys of the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates and the Indus, warrior-kings used force to tax food-producers, who in effect exchanged their surplus for protection from other marauders, accepting thereby the discipline of government and inventing in the process a means of supporting a surplus population who were not producers or warriors. Inevitably, the exchange of surplus food for government necessitated an intricate accounting and inventorizing record, leading in turn to the invention of writing and materials upon which to record. At this point it was apparent that the beginnings of urban civilization in these river-valleys saw the rise of government, of bureaucracy, and of an archival system preserving knowledge of taxes and surplus food-stuffs. The first sign of organized collecting — a bureaucracy and archives — thus appears with the beginnings of urban civilization no more than 10,000 years ago. Considering the time-span of human existence, it was indeed a recent development in the evolution of human societies.

Urban civilization and collecting have existed together ever since. With our primitive ancestors, we are still familiar with government as a tax-collecting process. But if today we hail the great national libraries of the world as the chief practitioners of large-scale collecting, it is something of a shock to recognize that their antecedents literally stretch back to the very dawn of civilization. Of course, these record offices attached to the granary and treasury departments were primarily for administrative purposes. And if they were not yet repositories of literary materials, they were the workshops of a new administrative class who soon gave evidence that one of the first fruits of urban civilization was the beginning of literature.

It is but a small step from inventory accounting to recording events and actions — and an easy one to their embellishment. The vast scribal class apparently provided the necessary specialists. The conduct of official correspondence, with

the need for reference to previous missives and directives naturally required that the scribes either organize the archives or at least have ready access to them. In producing commemorative works — and the more obvious works of glorification of the reign — they undoubtedly employed the archives for reference purposes. According to surviving records, the founder of the XII Egyptian dynasty in determining the boundaries of the provinces resorted to “what was written in the books and what he found in old writings . . . because he so loved the truth.”

While ancient man employed his newly-invented alphabets to record political, religious and astronomical events, he was still conveying orally from one generation to another the songs, ballads and stories which served either to edify or to amuse him. As this non-official and non-archival literature began to be recorded, it too began to be collected and generally by the same political and priestly figures who were forming the archives. Compared to the products of administrative activity, this was a minor undertaking, and it would be misleading to argue on this basis for the existence of an independent literary class. This kind of recording and editing was, of course, the work of the scribes, and its collecting into libraries became one of the characteristic signs of regal and priestly leisure and splendor.

Evidence of palace and temple libraries are particularly plentiful for ancient Egypt. Surviving records refer to a library of Khufu, a monarch of the IVth dynasty and another inscription mentions the library of Khafra, the builder of the second pyramid. At Edfu there was a temple library which catalogued its lists of books on the wall. The location of Akhenaton's library has also been established. The most famous of the Egyptian libraries of the second millenium has been described by Diodorus Siculus as belonging to King Osymandyas who had been identified as Rameses II (1300-1236 B.C.).

Literature collecting was also practised in ancient Mesopotamia. S. N. Kramer in *From the Tablets of Sumer* has a chapter with the dramatic title: “The First Library Catalogue” in which he discusses two clay tablets, one listing 62 titles and the other 68. The first of these is now at the University Museum in Philadelphia, the second at the Louvre. An additional point of interest is that these two catalogues share some 43 titles. Between them the two catalogues list 87 different literary compositions, of which 32 are known today by surviving texts. How vast the corpus of Babylonian literature was can not be estimated with any accuracy, but excavations suggest that every temple possessed a library which housed literary as well as astronomical works. Some of these were truly impressive even by modern standards. At Lagash, excavators have uncovered a collection of more than 30,000 tablets which were arranged on shelves about 2700 B.C. And the temple archive-library at Nippur contained a collection of upwards of 40,000 tablets and fragments, the earliest dating from the middle of the third millenium.

Perhaps the most interesting of all these Mesopotamian libraries was the magnificent collection formed in Nineveh in the 7th century B.C. by Assur-banipal, King of Assyria. A great patron of art as well as literature, his library

consisted of some 10,000 titles. In establishing his desiderata list to guide accessions, Assur-bani-pal requested "rituals, prayers, inscriptions on stone, and whatever may be good for kingship . . . (as well as) good for my palace." Housed in a royal palace, there is surviving evidence that the collection was methodically arranged and catalogued and that the library was available for the general use of the king's subjects. The discovery of this library in 1850 was one of the great finds of the British archaeologist Layard, and the subsequent transfer of a good portion of the tablets to the British Museum put at the disposal of scholars for the first time a vast amount of material for the reconstruction of ancient life and history of Assyria and Babylonia, a work which was now possible because of the recent deciphering of the cuneiform language.

The ancient Hebrews, caught up between the two areas of civilization which flourished in the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates basins and with a history intimately intertwined with both, were to be the only people of Near Eastern antiquity who succeeded in evolving a long narrative of their historical experience which survived in the popular consciousness and was transmitted to another age and place. A civilization which so rapidly produced a popular literature must have indeed had small libraries, at least in the synagogues if not elsewhere. Indeed it is intriguing that one Hebrew city is literally called Booktown, Kiriath-sepher. But assumptions aside, there is no direct surviving artifact evidence of the existence of archives or libraries among the Hebrews. The text of the Old Testament, however, is revelatory of practices remarkably similar to those found in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Indeed it is from Old Testament genealogies, chronologies, and chronographs — the popular narrative record — that the historian can draw some slight conclusions about the relationship between the scribes' work, Hebrew public documents, and the archives. In the Books of Kings and Chronicles alone there are more than two dozen references of this kind, and in the Books of Numbers, Josiah and Second Samuel there are others. It would be perhaps charitable to assume that the scribes knew and used the archives; but it is at least beyond contention that they used public documents which were ultimately derived from an archival foundation. The process is indicated in Second Maccabees, which is a very late compilation indeed, when it speaks of the mid-fifth century Nehemiah as "founding a library, gathered together the things concerning the kings and prophets, and the (writings) of David and letters of kings about sacred gifts." Regrettably our direct knowledge of Hebrew archives and libraries is almost non-existent, and what little concerning them can be derived from a study of the Old Testament's textual history tantalizes rather than satisfies.

Very little is known of the libraries of the Greek mainland, although it is said that Pisistratus, Plato, and Aristotle were considerable collectors. But Greek cultural influences, crystallized in the enlightened rule of the Ptolemies, made the libraries of Alexandria the most important as well as the most renowned of the ancient world. The collecting was systematic, energetic and free from parochial exclusiveness. Although the authorities do not agree on their estimates,

it would seem that the two libraries of Alexandria between them possessed between 400,000 to 700,000 volumes, or rolls, the Bruchium being considerably larger than the Serapeum. It was the former which was accidentally destroyed when Caesar set fire to the fleet in the harbor of Alexandria. To repair the loss, Antony presented Cleopatra with the library of the kings of Pergamum, which it was said numbered some 200,000 volumes.

As culture came to Rome through conquest and booty, libraries came *en bloc*, the first apparently being brought by Aemilius Paulus from Macedonia after the defeat of Perseus in 167 B.C. By the last century of the republic, book collecting had become a fashionable activity. Polybius records that he met Scipio in a public library. Indeed one target of anti-intellectual rancor in Seneca's scorn and Lucian's biting wit was the Roman propensity for collecting. One of the great collectors, M. Terentius Varro, correspondent and friend of Cicero (an equally zealous collector), even wrote a book on libraries. The fervor of private collectors was soon matched by the state, and the establishment of public libraries became one of the cultural benefits of the empire. It has been estimated that in the fourth century there were no less than 28 public libraries in Rome alone and many more throughout the provinces. Through the ravages of fire, thievery, barbarism and religion, none of these survived intact, although individual manuscripts were to find their way into the libraries which monastic piety created in Christian Europe.

If man's social — as distinct from his biological — evolution has involved a time-span of 500,000 years, then the most recent 10,000 years, the era of civilization which followed the eras of savagery and barbarism, has been the shortest period of man's accumulating experience. And of this period, thanks to archaeological methods of research, our knowledge barely stretches beyond 5000 years. But when the rivers of the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates and the Indus blossomed forth with man's first gropings toward an urban civilization, it is certainly striking to note how quickly archives and libraries came into existence. Whatever the causes which led to the decisive change in man's mode of life, the collecting of records and literature significantly became one of the novel features of the latest stage in cultural development. It is perhaps surprising to us that political and administrative complexity so quickly produced archives; but that leisure and curiosity so early led to libraries, to the collecting of literature, and the encouragement of scholarship is a major reflection of man's new path of achievement. Nevertheless, if these triumphs spoke of a new cultural sophistication, they were to prove premature. The institutional gains of Near Eastern and classical antiquity were not to survive as a guide to western European civilization. Indeed a millenium-and-a-half after Christ elapsed before the Renaissance spirit revived book-collecting as a significant cultural activity, and almost two millenia before a European library surpassed in size those of ancient Alexandria.

THE SCHOLAR-LIBRARIAN

In the long corridors of time, librarians have sometimes been appointed because they were scholars of distinction. One thinks of Richard Bentley, a Keeper of the Royal Library in England who was also a major classical scholar. Or of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz, who was not only a great mathematician and philosopher but also the great librarian of his age with a unique vision of the research library. Collectors are important, of course, to the growth of all kinds of libraries, but being perhaps more glamorous they have received more attention: the stories of Archbishop Parker, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, John Selden, Edward Coke, Matthew Corvinus, and the legions of modern collectors — these are fairly well known. But the less glamorous and less celebrated job of establishing and running a library is still a neglected topic.

Some of our great modern libraries were the creation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the Vatican, Lincoln's Inn Library in London, the Royal Library in France, the libraries of Erasmus and Corvinus. These are all examples of great collections for their times, but they do not constitute public or research libraries in our modern sense. One may begin then in France with the great work of Gabriel Naude, whose *Avis pour dresser une bibliotheque* (1627) was the pioneer attempt to systematize ideas for the organization and administration of a new library. Naude was a scholar whose work in epigrams should now receive the attention of neo-Latinists and whose *quaestiones* have some importance in the history of political science. Translated into English by John Evelyn (1661) and into Latin (1703), Naude's *Avis* had several kinds of influence: upon English and other book collectors, and upon later organizers of libraries, like Leibnitz. But more immediately, Cardinal Mazarin appointed Naude to organize and establish the magnificent Mazarin Library, regarded by its collector as the eighth wonder of the world. Today, Raymond Irwin comments (in his introduction to *The English Library before 1700*), Naude's work "seems an admirably sane attempt to design a system of librarianship." Both bibliophile and scholar will applaud Naude's insistence that quality in books is more important than quantity, though inclusiveness is still regarded as a virtue. At about this time Abraham Whelock, professor of Arabic and reader in Anglo-Saxon, was appointed librarian of Cambridge University, and Oates comments that this was "the first occasion on which the post was considered one proper to be filled by a scholar of eminent reputation." Whelock served from 1629 until his death in 1653.

After Naude and John Durie, (appointed Keeper of the Royal Library in 1650, the year he published *The Reformed Library Keeper*) came Richard Bentley's publication in 1697 of his *Proposal for building a Royal Library*. Then we have the contributions of Leibnitz, the greatest librarian of his age, who has been commemorated by Irwin as the first man to have a clear vision of an organized, comprehensive and scholarly research library. He insisted that it have adequate endowments, regular acquisitions and good planning, and for him the emphasis was always to be put on quality rather than on variety or cost.

On the continent during the nineteenth century there was a small regiment of distinguished classicists who were librarians in Germany and Sweden, in France and Italy. The history of classical scholarship as recorded in the pioneer work of Sandys again and again notes the work of classical scholars, sometimes of great renown, in the establishing or administering of libraries. Doubtless this was due to an oversupply of classical scholars, but whatever the cause the consequence for collection-building was a significant development which continued down to the present. The effects upon scholars individually have not, I think, been studied, but it is manifest that for many scholars the opportunity of working in a research library — granted some leisure for private research, and assuming that the alternative too often was a teaching schedule that allowed little time for such research — the opportunity was often enough beneficial to institution, scholar and scholarship.

To focus upon one example, the Vatican Library in Rome, is a case in point. In the twentieth century (indeed, largely since the time of Leo XIII), the Vatican Library has had a succession of scholar-librarians. As prefect and pro-prefect there have been Ratti, Mercati, Albareda and Tisserant. One thinks of the erudition and scholarly dedication in the *Festschriften* presented in honor of the several cardinal-librarians: to Ehrle (1924), Mercati (1946), Albareda (1962), and Tisserant (1964). One recalls other names of high scholarly distinction among the Vatican's librarians: Pelzer, Devreesse, Ruyschaert. Clearly, the Vatican Library has not weakened its commitment to a tradition of scholar-librarians that has brought prestige to it as a major research library. The warmth of affection and respect for the late Cardinal Tisserant, a key figure in the modern reorganization of the Library, is a recent reflection of that prestige.

At the British Museum, a gold mine of scholarship, the office of director and principal librarian has been filled by a number of great scholars. One who added considerable distinction to the office was the archaeologist and historian Sir Frederic Kenyon (1909 to 1930), another the bibliographer and editor Sir Frank Francis (1959 to 1968). The keepers and assistant keepers of printed books and manuscripts have again and again been notable scholars: Robert Proctor, A. W. Pollard, Francis Wormald, and many others. Like the British Museum, Oxford has also had its traditions of the scholar-librarian, and the present Bodley's Librarian, Robert Shackleton, is but the latest in a succession of scholars in that office. The librarians of the colleges at Cambridge and London as well as at Oxford have also included many scholars: R. W. Chambers, W. W. Greg, among others. Canada's National Library was for years graced by the scholarly Kaye Lamb.

To turn from considerations along national lines to one of topics, the field of incunabula was almost exclusively charted by librarian-bibliographers. Ludwig Hain, librarian of the Hof-und Staatsbibliothek in Munich from 1826 to 1838, produced his *Repertorium Bibliographicum*, which in two volumes listed by order of author over 16,000 titles printed before 1500. What is novel is that Hain faithfully recorded the incipits and explicits of each book and gave technical descriptions of sufficient detail and accuracy to make identifications and

checks possible. Another incunabulist, Henry Bradshaw, served in the Cambridge University Library from the time he was 25 and was university librarian from 1867 until his death in 1886. He is commemorated in a lovely and appropriate way in the Henry Bradshaw Society, founded in 1890 for the publishing of rare liturgical texts. Bradshaw's innovation was the grouping of printed books by origin, which permitted comparisons, a technique later developed by Proctor. We pass by the work of Blades and Holtrop, and that of Konrad Burger, who first indexed the printers contained in Hain. Of Robert Proctor, assistant in printed books at the British Museum from 1893 until his untimely and tragic death in 1903, Victor Scholderer has said that "he found the history of early printing guesswork and left it a science." Proctor's *Index to Early Printed Books in the British Museum . . . with Notes of those in the Bodleian*, 2 volumes (1898-9) was a landmark in itself and it laid the foundation for the still continuing *British Museum Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century*. Clearly, the study of incunabula and descriptive bibliography generally was dominated by scholarly librarians for more than a century, and that tradition has continued in America with the work of the late W. A. Jackson at Harvard, of Curt Buhler at the Morgan, and of Frederic Goff at the Library of Congress.

A larger pattern of scholar-librarians was indeed at one time to be found in the United States — one has only to recall the names of W. C. Ford, Melvil Dewey, and L. C.'s Putnam. With the increase in numbers and the rapid growth of all American libraries, the advent of the technical library administrator — who spends so much of his time in meetings, whether within the university or library or off-campus, with boards of trustees, at meetings of professional societies, national and international — tended to displace scholar-librarians or too often relegate them only to rare book departments. The consequence has been a split between library staffs and teaching faculties, again and again generating the complaint that the library staff do not have enough recognition or prestige. Besides strain among personnel, there are other consequences: too often major decisions are made for new programs or changes of curriculum without consulting or perhaps even informing the librarian. Further, advice and consultation break down: too often the counsel of the reference librarian is not sought in problem areas where it would have value and too often members of the faculty are not sufficiently involved in planning collections and other library development.

The situation is complex enough, with galaxies of problems that I would not wish to minimize, nor would I want to pretend that a single solution would solve any of these problems. But I do believe that where there has been a librarian with scholarly competence — whether in the humanities or in bibliographical sciences and techniques or as an editor — to earn the respect of colleagues in academic departments, the split has been narrower and the gains in cooperation correspondingly greater. In some of the colleges and universities there have been examples of scholar-librarians in recent years: Michigan, Haverford, Harvard, UCLA, and others. Princeton would be an example of a major university that not only cross-appointed its librarian to a major department but on more than

one occasion appointed distinguished members of its faculty to the office of librarian, and this serves to indicate that the usual schism between library and teaching faculty is not only not impossible to bridge but may indeed even be closed. Perhaps the earlier example of Abraham Whelock can be instructive, when we bear in mind Oates' comment that his appointment as librarian of Cambridge was "the first occasion on which the post was considered one proper to be filled by a scholar of eminent reputation"; the post *is* that important, and it should be so filled. The most recent appointment of Louis L. Martz as Rare Book Librarian at Yale's Beinecke Library, following as it does on the heels of G. E. Bentley's parallel appointment at Princeton, make it clear that this post is being considered important enough to be filled by scholars of international reputation.

It is indeed difficult to think of a single major library that was not blessed with a scholar-librarian at a crucial moment in its history, whether at its founding (as with Naude and the Mazarin), or in its major planning and development (as with Harvard's Widener, Law and Houghton Libraries), or with major reorganization (as with Herbert Putnam and the Library of Congress). The advances in library technology during the less than a century since Melvil Dewey's founding of the Library School at Columbia (in 1887) have been remarkable, and particularly at a moment in history when computers, photographic and electronic processes, and other technological developments promise to transform information retrieval and other library services, no one would wish less than the best and fullest technological knowledge. For this we must turn to trained librarians and technological experts, and gratefully. But neither learning nor librarianship is simply a matter of information retrieval, and the great decisions in education, learning and research are rarely made — nor should they be made — by the specialists or technicians. Every university and research library faces profound policy decisions concerning acquisitions and areas of concentration, methods and techniques not only of technical services but also of relating to teaching and research, and the technical cannot be abstracted from larger humanistic consideration. (I do not propose the substitution of one degree for another — the Ph.D. for the M.S.L.S. or doctorate in library science — for what is desired is humanistic perspective and value combined with a concern for both the research and teaching functions of the university and like institutions. No simple degree requirement is likely to provide automatically the kind of scholar-librarian that is being here advocated.) Looking backwards down the corridors of time from some future point it may well be seen that in the last quarter of the twentieth century — perhaps more than in any other period in the modern history of libraries — humanistically trained scholars, possessing library training or experience, were needed to establish new vision and directions so urgently demanded for universities and other institutions of learning and education. We do well now to note the traditions of the scholar-librarian and to measure the great potential of his contributions to libraries and learning.

ON COLLECTING INCUNABULA

An incunabulum is a book or pamphlet, or any piece of printed matter, printed before 1501. The name comes from the Latin word for "cradle" — a little cradle thing. The Germans call them *Wiegendrucke*, cradle-printings; the French have simply taken the name *incunable*; we have tried to anglicize it in the same way although the word incunable, even after fully sixty years of use, was not to be found in the Webster Second International Dictionary. Webster III, in spite of its vast shortcomings, does have it — and with a correct definition. Webster II, Random House, and even the Oxford English Dictionary, make a great point of being wrong in the definition of incunabulum — with the entire year 1500 left out of calculation.

Except for its convenience as a date, there does not seem to have been any special reason why the last day of the 15th century was taken as the cut-off point for books which presumably had virtue for their age alone. It is certainly true that as the years pass, this cut-off date makes less and less sense if it is to indicate scarcity or age or value or beauty. Even in my comparatively short term of 39 years as a bookseller, books of the 1501-1535 period have become that much older and that much more desirable, as may be seen from the descriptions and prices in booksellers' catalogs. Indeed, what seems to be a fairly new term has become more and more common in the past few years, particularly in European lists: post-incunabula. In some cases this term has just about as much meaning as the Bourgeois Gentilhomme's "I've been talking prose all my life without knowing it" — all literature being quite properly divided into Poetry and Prose or, as in some catalogs we receive, Fiction and Non-Fiction. Recently, I have received more than one catalog in which a 1506 or 1510 imprint is listed under "Incunabula." In one case — a beautiful and detailed catalog put out by the "Father of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association (International)" himself — I was not permitted to return a book so listed (it had no printed date) even after it was established that it was published well after 1500. Generally, however, a post-incunabulum has come to mean a book printed fairly early (up to about 1530) in the 16th century whose type and format make it difficult to distinguish from a true incunable.

It is impossible to pinpoint how and when the printing and format of books started to change from those of the typical incunable, but the first Aldus, who produced many fine incunabula, was doubtless the chief printer who helped push the 15th century into the 16th, mainly by printing many books in small format and low prices.

How many *different* titles were printed in the 15th century? How many pieces in all? Approximately how many have survived? Is it likely that any new caches will be found? Who has incunabula and where are they? How much are they worth? These questions, often asked, seem to me legitimate and interesting and I shall try to answer as best I can.

Hain's great bibliography of incunabula was published from 1824-1893 and after more than four-thirds of a century remains the indispensable work. He listed 16,299 different *printings* although many were duplications of the same

work and others differed only in some aspect of typesetting. In 1900 Copinger added some 6000 new entries; some years later Reichling added another 2146 and every year since then a few more have been found. The great *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, whose first volume was published in 1926 and of which seven volumes and the first fascicle of the eighth were published before 1940 — and nothing since — shows 9500 items between A and Eigenschaft. A computation based on Hain-Copinger-Reichling and on Goff's excellent census, *Incunabula in American Libraries* (1964), an extension of Miss Stillwell's equally fine work (1940), suggests that there are extant today some 28,000 different incunabula editions. When we use our modern inventories to check 15th century holdings or sales lists of the same period and other contemporary references, it would appear that only a very small number of the items printed in the 15th century have been completely lost to us. It would be most surprising if in the next fifty years another 400 items, or between 1 and 1½%, should be found. I differ in this estimate from two incunabulists each of whom knows more about the field than I can ever hope to, Rudolf Hirsch and Curt Buhler, yet on this particular point I am prepared to maintain my position against them.

As for the number of *copies* printed, from contemporary sources we are able to make a fair guess that the average printing was in the neighborhood of 350, so that the total number of *pieces* printed would be in the magnitude of some 9 to 11 million — we can allow ourselves a million leeway one way or the other. Here, of course, there is a vast difference between what there *was* and what there *is*. While 97-98% of the *titles* printed in the 15th century may still be extant, the amount of material that has actually survived is considerably less. Precision in this matter, however, is not apparently attainable. Although Goff's third census (1964) counted 47,188 *copies* in North America, an exact accounting of all collections seems impossible. For example, the *Gesamtkatalog* has a disconcerting way of saying (after listing with great care and detail 40 locations of an item) "und einige andere" — the definition of "einige" being left to us — or even "und viele andere," which is frightening, because if it is "viele" after 40 specific locations, who is to guess how many others there are? However, taking such vagueness into consideration and making an allowance for the items held in Spanish or Dutch or even Italian cathedrals or other places which did not report their holdings, we can conclude that there still is a substantial amount of material to be inventoried.

As a small corollary to this, however, I want to add a few words about the quantity of incunabula which is actually "on the market" at the present time, *i.e.* items which are on dealers' shelves throughout the world plus those in private hands which are either for sale now, or which are likely to be sold to dealers or at auction within the foreseeable future, rather than being deposited in libraries where they will presumably rest forever. Here the figure, instead of being surprisingly large, is, to me at least, surprisingly small. A colleague and I, who between us either have visited or know fairly well most of the world's booksellers who handle incunabula, calculated that in dealers' hands at the present time there are no more than 6000 pieces. Probably no more than half a dozen, surely no more than a dozen shops can offer more than 100 incunabula

each, and not more than a few hundred come into the market from private hands each year, via auction or private sale.

Almost all the available incunabula (and this is also mainly true of the ones in libraries and in private hands) are in North America and Europe; there is almost nothing available for sale in any of the other four continents. As for those in libraries, Munich has by far the largest collection in the world and there are excellent holdings in the Vatican, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the British Museum. In America the largest collection is at the Library of Congress and anyone who is interested in other locations of large collections will find a good listing in Goff.

People have said to me, in effect, “collecting incunables must be fun and you have put together quite a collection but you started early and were lucky; surely, unless one were quite wealthy, it would not be possible now to start such a collection with a hope of getting very far with it.” Part of the reason for this article is to say that this is not so, or at least is so only with much modification. A catalog of the bookseller Olschki appeared with a cover showing a headless and armless torso, and listed in it were 100 imperfect incunables; Mr. Olschki wanted to suggest that although imperfect the Nike or Venus de Milo are still great works and so also are less-than-perfect incunabula. It is true that the modest would-be collector cannot hope to get a complete *Catholicon* or even a Jenson *Cicero* and, although available, a complete Nuremberg Chronicle — a not uncommon book — has gone up 10 times in price in the past 15 years. But if he is content to start modestly and if he is willing to buy non-literary items (e.g. sermons or Papal bulls) and some incomplete items, he will still, even at this late date, find a fair amount of material at low prices.

A few words about values and prices. My collection, although a good and fairly large one, is not by any means a *great* one; and it would not have been a great one even if I had never been so foolish as to have sold all the incunabula I did sell before deciding that I wanted to keep them myself. But in the past few years I have tried to build it up so that it would have a good many representative items in it, and I have had to spend substantial sums on such items as two English incunabula, a leaf of the Gutenberg Bible, the Aldine edition of *Politian*, a fine Spanish *Seneca*, and the only incunable printed in Constantinople, a Hebrew work of 1493. These cost from \$500 each to more than \$5000. It is largely true, then, that the best items are the most expensive, for the chances are small of finding what we in the book-business call a “sleeper” among incunabula. But aside from the most expensive dozen or two, the average cost of the books to me was probably not as much as \$150.00, and there are many which cost, on the open market and not too long ago, not more than \$50.00 to \$75.00. I am not implying that these are completely negligible amounts, but one does not find or buy an incunable every day or even every month and I believe that many people — if they decided on incunabula collecting (rather than some other mania!) — would find that not only could they afford it but that the satisfaction of obtaining something of lasting and even increasing value, and often of great beauty, would, indeed, make the price seem inconsequential. I hope that one or two of the readers of this article will be persuaded.

GUIDE TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS,
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY;
A PRELIMINARY INVENTORY

The members of the Society attending the Tenth Annual Meeting expressed a wish for some up-to-date record of the collections now available in the Rare Books and Special Collections Department of the Brandeis University Library. It has not been easy to assemble the information. Changes of administration, personnel and problems of record-keeping have created difficulties which make us reluctant to present a listing on any other basis than the tentative. It may well be, however, that publication in preliminary form will help the library staff to complete the record and to correct errors. It is on that basis that the following inventory is presented.

For some years Special Collections materials have been housed in the Dibner Room, the Vault, the Manuscript Room and the Cage. With the availability of more space in the Minus-1 Level, a portion of the collection is being re-shelved in that area with resulting improvement in storage, accessibility, and servicing. The new space will provide expansion for a few years at best.

The increase in the collections serviced by the Rare Books and Special Collections Department is of course a matter of considerable satisfaction to the members of the Society of Bibliophiles whose sole interest lies in this aspect of the Library's growth. The over-all growth of the Library is the responsibility of the National Women's Committee whose contribution represents a matchless endowment. It should be noted that the present listing excludes the "Special Collections Shelves" which the National Women's Committee has sponsored over the years.

Bibliography and Typography
Reference Collection
McMurtrie Imprints Collection

Rare Books — General
Xylographs and Incunabula
Presentation Copies
Association Copies
Fore Edge Paintings
Special Bindings
Miniature Books

Rare Books — National Imprint Collection
Sabin-Evans Imprints
Short-Title Catalogue Imprints
Wing Imprints

Fine Presses and Private Printing (to 1801)

Aldine Collection

Gifts of Mrs. Ludwig Lewisohn, Bruno Weil, Walter Goldwater,
Philip Neufeld

Baskerville Collection

Elzevir Collection

Estienne Collection

Foulis Collection

Plantin Collection

Fine Presses and Private Printing (from 1801)

Ampersand Club

Ashendene

Ballantyne

Bibliophile Society of Boston

Bird & Bull

Black Sun Press

Book Club of California

Bowling Green Press

Centaur

Curwen

First Editions Club

Fountain Press

Crosby Gaige

Golden Cockerel

Grabhorn

Grolier Club

Heritage Press

Limited Editions Club

Nonesuch

Oriole

Pickering

Pynson

Roycroft

Shakespeare Head

Trianon Press

History, Politics, Economics, Sociology

General

The Radical Pamphlet Collection

Jewish Resistance Movements in World War II

Bolivia

Bolivian Political Books and Pamphlets

France

Helen S. Slosberg Alfred Dreyfus Collection
The Saint-Simon Collection
The French Revolution Pamphlet Collection
The Mazarinades

Russia

The Leon Trotsky Collection

Spain

The Spanish Civil War Collection

U.S.A.

Perry Miller Collection on Colonial America
Leo Frank Collection
Sacco-Vanzetti Collection

Exploration

Charles McKew Parr Collection on Magellan and the Age of Discovery

Literature

American

Walt Whitman Collection
Ludwig Lewisohn Collection
Edward Levy Collection of Horatio Alger
Edward Levy Collection of American Dime Novels
Albert Boni Collection of Henry James
Irving Wallace Collection
Twentieth Century Popular Novel Collection
Alfred Rice Collection of Ernest Hemingway

British

John Galsworthy Collection
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pinsof Collection of Joseph Conrad

German

Oscar Samek Collection of Karl Kraus

Science, Medicine, Technology

Bern Dibner Collection of Leonardo de Vinci

Curiosa

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pinsof Collection of Oriental Exotica

Religion

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pinsof Collection of Lunarios
Maurice Spertus Collection of Judaica and Hebraica
Leonard M. Simons Collection of Judaica
Walter Goldwater Collection of Flavius Josephus

Graphic Arts

Benjamin H. and Julia M. Trustman Collection of Honoré Daumier
Justin G. Turner Collection of Lincolnia
Mrs. David Klein Collection of Japanese Prints
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pinsof Collection of German Prints
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Glaser Collection of Books Illustrated by Artists
Arthur and Charlotte Vershbow Collection of Early Illustrated Books

Music

Daniel Segal Collection of Early American Sheet Music
Reginald DeKoven Collection
Victor Young Collection
Edward Levy Collection of American Song Books
Theater
Play Bills Collection
Sophie Tucker Collection of Scrap Books

Non-Book Materials

Numismatics
Presidential Commemorative Medals
Philatelic Material
 Abrams Collection
 Leo Sheinfeld Collection of Israeli Stamps
 Michael Miller Collection of Danish West Indies Stamps, Gift of
 Mrs. Lee Ayares Katz
Seals
Casts and Sculptures
Ceramics
 Dr. and Mrs. Bernard H. Kessner Collection of Doughty Birds
Paintings
Photographs
 Carl Van Vechten Theater Collection
Antique Watches
 Eli B. Cohen Collection
Snuff Bottles
 Jack Katz Collection

Manuscripts (Excluding Spanish Civil War, Archives and Personalia)

Autograph Letters (arranged alphabetically)

American

Miscellany Series

George A. Barton Papers

George N. Caylor Journals

John Cheever Manuscripts

Chief Justices' Collection

Foster Furcolo Archives

Joseph Heller Manuscripts

Fannie Hurst Papers

Joseph M. Jacobs Collection of John Galsworthy Papers

Louis Kronenberger Manuscripts

Eduard Lasker Papers

Arthur Laurents Collection

Ludwig Lewisohn Papers

David E. Niles Papers

Leo Rosten Manuscripts

Sacco-Vanzetti Collection

Philip D. and Elsie O. Sang Collection of Signers of the Constitution

Philip D. and Elsie O. Sang Collection of the Signers of the
Declaration of Independence

Philip D. and Elsie O. Sang Collection of Daniel Webster Letters

Irving Wallace Manuscripts

British

Joseph M. Jacobs Collection of John Galsworthy Papers

French

Miscellany Series

Archives of the French Jewish Community (1794-1872)

Maxim Piha Collection

Marcel Proust Letters

Russia

Count and Countess Ilya Tolstoi Collection

Judaica and Hebraica

Miscellany Series

Megillahs